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Opia: Revealing the I

Calliope

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2014
CALLIOPE XLV

Opia: Revealing the J



2014
CALLIOPE XLVI

Opia: Revealing the J



2014
CALLIOPE XLVI

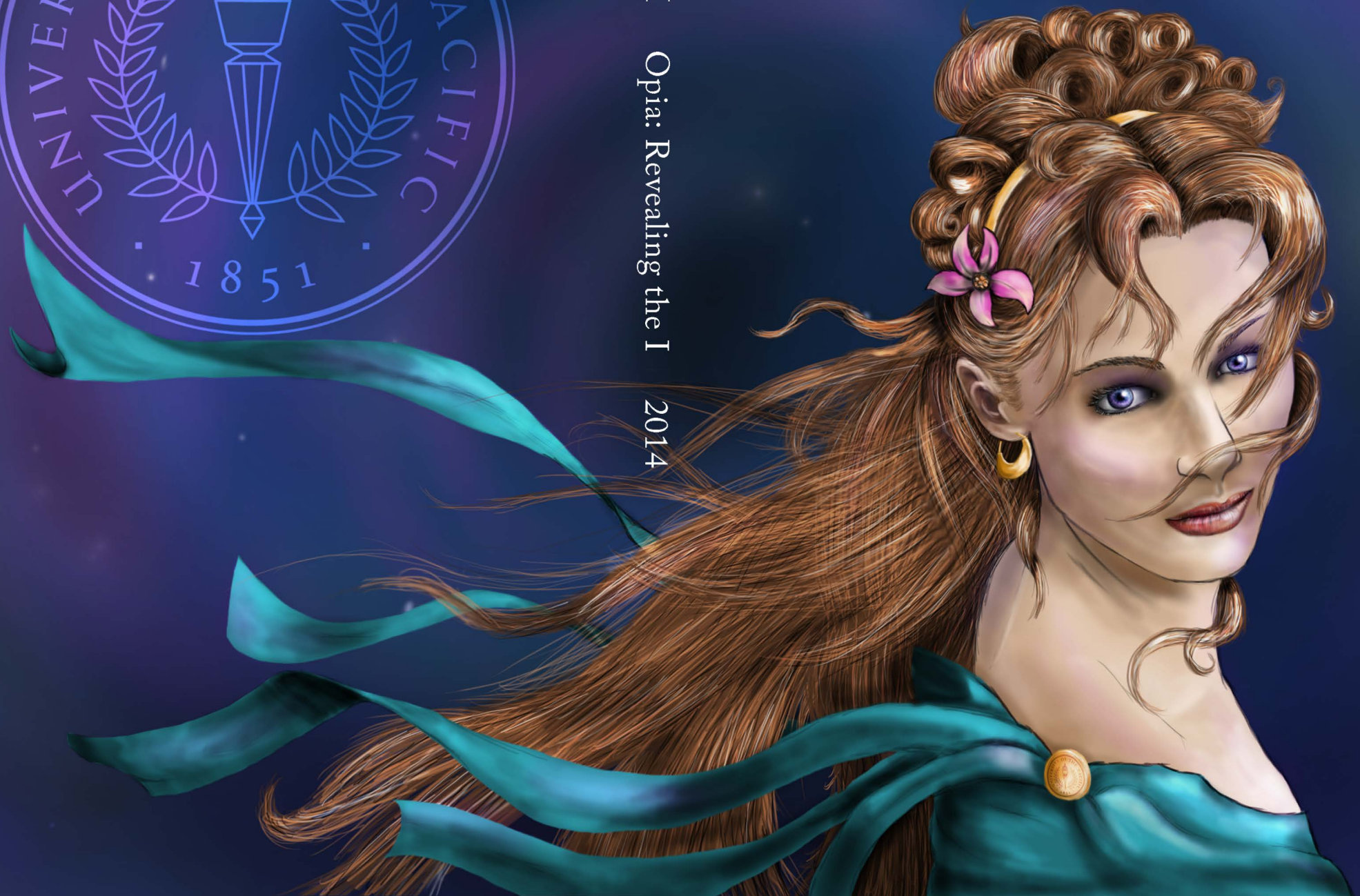
Opia: Revealing the I



Calliope XLVI

Opia: Revealing the I

2014



2014
CALLIOPE XLVI

Opia: Revealing the I

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Production Notes

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Past editions of Calliope and more information about the magazine can be found online at www.pacificalliope.wordpress.com.

The History of Calliope

Calliope, pronounced Kuh-Lie-Oh-Pea, is named for the muse of heroic poetry in Greek mythology and is Pacific's student literary and arts journal. First published in the spring of 1970, Calliope has since woven itself into Pacific's literary and art fabric. It features original art, poetry, prose, fiction, and essays created by Pacific's students and juried by the student editorial staff for final publication.

Previous literary publications that served as inspiration for Calliope were *The Pharos*, an annual published from 1893–1912 and the *Hieroglyph* from 1931–1933. The cover of the first issue of Calliope is the only one not illustrated by a Pacific student, instead featuring a copy of an illustration by art nouveau artist, Alphonse Mucha. In recent years, each year's cover has paid homage to our namesake by depicting a student representation of the muse.

Some issues have focused exclusively on specific genres such as fiction or poetry or were designed around a theme. The 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012 editions received national attention by winning Apex Awards for Publication Excellence.

Calliope continues as a vehicle of self-expression and creativity for Pacific students, and each issue reflects the talent of the students who contribute to it. Financial support comes from the Humanities Division within the College of the Pacific and we all benefit from this continued generosity.

Letter from the Literary Editor

ADNAN HASHTAM

“The truth is always something that is told, not something that is known. If there were no speaking or writing, there would be no truth about anything. There would only be what is.

— Susan Sontag, *The Benefactor* (1963)

To create art is to address the revolting, the hidden, and the most despised of what is in our world, to give it form and meaning and transform it into truth. That truth can translate to hope, or longing for an alternative reality, or merely serve as a revelation. Writing, as a form of confrontation, has the ability to be both invasive and vulnerable. It pushes us to recognize aspects of both our personal and collective lives that we otherwise might overlook. Thus, to write and create is to question, to protest, and to reveal the hidden and the confined.

This year’s Calliope reflects the ways in which writing as an art form establishes counter-realities. Accordingly, this year Calliope’s theme is ‘Opia’. As defined in John Koenig’s *The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows*, Opia means “the ambiguous intensity of looking someone in the eye, which can feel simultaneously invasive and vulnerable”. Thus, this issue of Calliope is based on that intensity, in confrontation and revelation.

As writers we have, the sometime dreadful, responsibility of telling the truth. This edition of Calliope reflects that very responsibility. It reflects University of the Pacific’s commitment to creativity and innovation—its perceptive and diverse student body and the many truths that we are moved to tell.

I have been privileged to serve as Calliope’s Literary Editor-in-Chief. I look forward to you, the reader, confronting the miraculously laid out visual and literary art before you.

Letter from the Visual Editors

ANDREW BISHOFBERGER, CHELSEA PALACIO, MICAELA TODD

The arts can be a window into the inner self, a portal through which we can glimpse the truth of another. The truth is not always something that is classically beautiful or pleasing, but it can be intriguing or thought provoking in incredible ways. Revealing an inner truth can leave one vulnerable and exposed, and it often does not happen all at once. But these short, intense bursts of revelation can be truly magnificent and give us a better grasp of the world and people around us.

This edition of *Calliope* focuses on the revelation of the inner person. As the visual editors, we wanted the look and feel of the publication to match the incredibly personal art contained within. *Calliope* herself is represented on the cover as a striking figure with a deep, intense gaze directed at the reader, surrounded by a mysterious, dark, but also striking and calm star scape. We wanted to reflect the intensity and mysterious nature found inside the visual and written pieces while being drawn in by the personal emotion behind each one.

Each piece in *Calliope* is incredibly strong on its own, and we do not want to mask its power with excessive clutter, leading us to create a simple, elegant layout that allowed each piece to shine, often pairing written and visual works together that enhance their singular meaning to create an even deeper experience. Giving each artist their moment to offer a fresh opinion, view, idea or experience with the reader is our greatest goal with this edition.

Past Literary Editor's Work: I Am Lover

DANIELLE PROCOPE

I want to be present at your loneliest moment.

It is when your head is draped with sadness and despair that I will
be the hand that rubs your back and soothes you.

That is me.

The giver. The light in the darkness. This is when I am my best at Love

When you desire it. Require it. When you are begging for it. Silently,
with pleading eyes. When the Love you gave to others has been
squandered and now you are all out. And in need of replenishing.

I know. I will love you.

Not because of who you are to me. But because of you. You who are
sugar and light and sunlight and eyelashes and smooth hands.

And because of me. Me who is empty apart from you. Asking you
to fill me with time and purpose.

I am codependent on your happiness. When I lick at your wounds,
I lick at my own. I am all air and potential inside.

I am Lover. That is me.

It is a lonely job when I do not have you: The Loved.

And when you are well again you will be gone. You will forget me
because once I pour my love into you I am skinny and then invisible.

But I will remain. Waiting patiently and solemnly for the next patient.

Letter from the Past Visual Editors

DANA SHIROMA AND SHENG MOUA

After we graduated and met designers from other academic backgrounds, we found that our experience with Calliope was a rare opportunity. It is evidence of the unique experience that is offered at Pacific, where multi-disciplinary collaborations are encouraged and pursued. We were grateful to be involved in this tradition and were fortunate to be the co-editors of *Synchronicity*, the 2013 edition of Calliope.

We initially expected *Synchronicity* to be our contribution to Pacific, but we found that the process significantly shaped us as designers. It allowed us to learn about the design industry at a professional level, where we experienced the sense of urgency and pressure that accompanies any design work. We faced these pressures head on as a creative challenge and carefully crafted *Synchronicity* without sacrificing quality. We quickly learned how to prioritize our time, asked others for guidance, and worked diligently and efficiently.

Despite the obstacles we overcame, Calliope represents more than the finished product. It is the opportunity to support the arts, to symbolize the value of the Pacific experience, and to showcase Pacific's artistic and literary talent to the community.

As we pursue our professional careers, we will look back at Calliope with fond memories and are grateful for the memorable learning experience.

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Do You Remember?

SERENA ZHEN

Your voice announced the start of my day
in the melody so sweet and familiar,
telling me
to rub awake my weary eyes,
to brush those baby teeth squeaky clean,
to get dressed in my pretty little clothes
so we can leave for breakfast.
Do you remember this?

You held my tiny hands
in your hands
three times my size.
Rough looking places
where lines multiply
are soft & smooth to the touch.
Off we went to *yum lai cha*
and *sik dan tat*,
my favorite part of the day.
We walked side by side –
me with my backpack
and light up shoes,
you with your cane
and warm leather jacket.
Together, we were adorable.
Together, we were strong.
Do you remember this?

I came to visit with mom and dad
to eat round sticky rice balls
that always escaped my chopsticks.
Assorted veggies danced with tiny pieces of fish.
They all swam together in our bowls
and we smiled when we took that first bite.

You picked from your mix
my favorite parts
and laid them in my soup.
Eyes lit up with smiles wide
as I ate them with delight.
Stories skipped from
voice to voice,
one end to the next.
I spoke of school
and you told old tales.
Do you remember this?

Mom reminded me to go home early.
Reservations at six, we're picking up the cake.
I see you again.
Your back is more hunched,
hands a little shaky,
and hair white as snow.
I can see the skin shine where hair once was,
now covered with a new friend,
hiding what years have done to you.
My voice refused to speak,
lost for words and useless thoughts.
All I could do was pour
into your porcelain
the chrysanthemum leaves
that danced around your tongue.
A simple gesture formed your crest,
yet to you meant so much more.
Something missed.
I stood next to you.
Cheese.
Snap.
Happy Birthday.
Do you remember this?

Doors slide open.
A lady grins and requests my signature.
I see your name,
I see your face.
“It’s been a while.”
I wheel you to moving pictures,
careful of your bruised feet,
and open my gift to you.
I cut desserts to pieces
and open the jar of sweet herbs and
meat soaked for flavor.
“Open up. Good job.”
I lower to my knees,
bending forward to look
up into your eyes
like a little girl with wonder.
I retell our memories,
the moments we’ve shared,
and ask once again,
“Do you remember me?”



Celestial Sphere
MORGAN ANDRE

Fuzzy Californian Rhapsody

SIMON HARRIS

Rebellious late teens, and baked. Raccoon eyes, hair that was bleached halfassed. Put the weed in the vaporizer. But don't get it too close to the fuse otherwise you'll burn it all, burn it all

Pass it here, you're taking all of it.

Shut the fuck up dipshit, you're just high, it's only been two minutes.

Midwestern earlysummer humidity. Cicadas buzzing to mask the sound of kids coughinglaughingdying. Trying to fight the inevitability of time by slowing it as much as possible. Never growing up, never growing up

Hey turn that shit up.

Turn that shit up.

Bitch shut up and smoke.

Turn that shit up

Hop into the pool and look at the sky. So hazy. So white. The infinite collision of warm chlorine water with chilled night air adding its contribution to the fog that embraces you as a brother and never lets go. You drift around and forget where you are. I'm melting out of my own body. One guy takes off his boxers and runs off into the forest naked. Laughing, Laughing

Let's watch a movie, you and me.

What should we watch?

How about this one with the white guy pointing a gun at us?

No I want to watch this one more.

But that one is just another white guy pointing a gun at us.

Oh

The childish twangs of a ukulele in the background. There's always one fucking guy that has to play the ukulele or guitar all night like he's the next Kurt Cobain, a martyr motherfucker who's so into what he does that he has to play while the rest of us are slouching about, trying to find a bag of Fritos around the house or something

Who's playing the ukulele

Turn that shit down

Uh, one thing 'bout music, when it hit you feel no pain

White folks say it controls your brain

I grew out of smoking weed a long time ago, maybe three years or so. One thing is that I finally started to understand the concept of money; weed in terms of standard street price is over twice as expensive in Chicago as what you can find in California. Also, I was starting to realize that I was now an adult and in order to be part of a functioning society, I had to grow up. I guess weed fell in the category of one of those childish habits that I threw out of my life. The world was now a scary place; just a few months after turning eighteen, I read an article about one of my classmates at school that got arrested because he had sex with a thirteen year old girl at some fast food joint and ended up giving her gonorrhea. He barely took a step into the world and shot himself in the foot. Of course, smoking some marijuana is nowhere near as damaging as the act of rape, but likewise my liability (or lack thereof) was nowhere near the same league with some of my wealthier

suburbanites who could have their parents bail them out of the frozen parts of Dante's *Inferno* if they wanted to.

Look, don't nobody look like that, nobody even live like that, you know what I'm saying? You watching garbage, nothing but garbage, straight up garbage

Yo, why don't you just back up from the TV, read a book or something

Read about yourself, learn your culture, you know what I'm saying?

She watch Channel Zero

She watch

She watch

She watch

After I stopped smoking, I felt that I needed something else to fill up my life and seriously took up the Korean sect of Buddhism known as Won Buddhism to learn about spirituality. The monks at the temple back home in Chicago used to tell me that meditation can be done at any point in someone's day and not just sitting down. Supposedly, I can meditate even when I eat. Even when I walk. Even when I'm trying to take a piss in the city and some homeless guy is staring at my junk from the next stall over. Okay, then.

But the Midwest isn't necessarily the Mecca for Won Buddhism—the East and West Coasts are. That's why I visited the temple in Oakland during the summer after graduation, because something about monks and their lifestyles intrigued me. I wanted to know how they integrated themselves into a world that I found to be so materialistic and commoditizing. I wanted to know how they seemed to be so invulnerable to the happenings of the world and most importantly, how the hell they did it without taking drugs. Seriously, talking to one of

them is like talking to a Pillsbury Doughboy; you could poke them in the god damn eye and they'll just laugh in your face.

"Tee hee!"

I went in there with this figurative mentality that I would show up and be immediately dressed in a brown robe and sent through training to harden my resilience. Maybe some wrinkly green midget would throw me a lightsaber or something and tell me to use the force while kicking my ass with his tiny green feet. Instead, the monk's mother, who was also a very highlyesteemed Buddhist priestess, led me to a room about twice the size of a closet and introduced me to what life would be like for the next month.

"The morning prayer bell rings at fivethirty."

Shit.

I want you to do me a favor. Stop reading this story and go sit down somewhere comfortable. Look up the halflotus position if you don't know what it is, and keep your back arched completely straight while relaxing your shoulders. Tuck your chin inwards. Put your hands on your knees with palms facing up, and then pause—

For five minutes.

What distracts you? Maybe a fly on the window, or a few cars driving by, or (since this was in Oakland) a few popping sounds of distant gunshots.

My initial reaction was, of course, shame. These monks probably thought that I was just another Westernized and ignorant boy, but they actually encouraged me to acknowledge my distractions. Getting rid of distractions is the ultimate goal, they say, but for beginners it is the process of enveloping even the smallest details of the environment within the conscious mind that leads one to true meditation.

Alright, how about meditating for ten minutes now?

Fifteen?

Yeah, you get the point. In my case, it was five hours. Every day. For a month. No meats, no American food loaded with grease, but a consistent supply of fresh mountain roots, white rice, and barley tea.

It was maybe a couple weeks in before my mind journal, a notebook in which I had written about my experience up to that point, degraded into doodles of some fried chicken and Chipotle burritos. I nearly went insane.

Actually, I did go insane. I cracked one day in the middle of cleaning the temple and snuck out to grab some Taco Bell. I'm normally grossed out by Taco Bell but, let me tell you, it was the first time where I genuinely worshipped the food that was in front of me. A bunch of shitty, addhotwatertomakeartificialmeat tacos. Delicious.

Aside from the small blips here and there, it was an amazing experience. I'm usually a late-night, sleep-in kind of guy, but waking up at five in the morning makes you appreciate how much longer your day becomes, and the simultaneous meditation training only helps in turning you into a much more productive person. There's nothing more rewarding and beautiful while sweeping the cracked sidewalks of the temple than watching the Bay Area fog slowly dissipate as white children and and black children and purple children and iridescent children gather to play soccer in the open fields of tattered Oakland grass. That is, after all, how I fell in love with a state named California; I promised myself that I would choose this place for my undergraduate education ever since.

I came back as a relatively changed person, although it's hard to explain how I've changed other than the fact that I felt like I had **WOKEN UP**. It was funny as hell to say the least to watch the bewildered face of my 어머님 as I asked for her to buy five pounds of roasted barley tea mixture for me.

“My 아들’s become an old man,” was all she had to say about that.

We enlist every instrument: Acoustic, electronic

Every so-called race, gender, and sexual preference

**Every per-son as beings of sound to acknowledge their
responsibility to**

Uplift the consciousness of the entire fucking World

Admittedly, I do miss the stoner days from time to time. Where I would float on my back and ascend to otherworldly dimensions. I would take a hit and feel the choking accumulation of salty vapors in the roof my mouth. You cough so much and so hard that all your blood vessels expand and take in so much THC that suddenly you’re laughing at the sound of your own laughter. The fog never clears. Turn that song up. I can’t hear over the fucking ukulele guy. Turn it up—

HEY YOU FUCKING KIDS BETTER CUT THAT SHIT OUT

Oh shit

Turn that shit down man

Oh fuck

Laugh

Run



Untitled
KELINA OROZCO

Dysphoria

ADRIAN COHEN

I can tell you what it's like to live in someone else's body.

It's not wanting to meet your reflection's eyes in the mirror on the way to the shower because you dread seeing the stranger who you know will be looking back at you. But you do, of course. It's unavoidable. You look in the mirror and there she is, the girl whose body you're inhabiting. Or at least that's what you like to tell yourself, because even though you know what utter bullshit the whole "trapped in the wrong body" thing is, you can't bring yourself to claim ownership of your soft skin and long lashes and gentle voice today. You meet her eyes and your stomach drops. Some days you don't feel okay again until you're dried off and in bed and too exhausted to think.

Living in someone else's body is spending hours upon hours on various websites that tell you how to walk, talk, eat, breathe like a man. You try desperately to soak up all the things that the other boys have always known, hating yourself for not knowing and hating yourself for not remembering every word and hating yourself for caring so much about this trash. These websites are degrading at best and sexist at worst.

They tell you that your slightly baggy clothes make you look like a box, not a boy, and that your curly hair means you will never pass as a man, and that only girls and faggots cross their legs at the ankles. These guides are the only mentors you're brave enough to consult.

And then you go outside and apply your newfound knowledge. You try to unlearn your smallness. You stand taller and talk louder and cross your legs ankleoverknee when you sit. You remember your smallness when the cashier says "Have a nice day, miss," as you pay for your lunch.

You feel as big as a mountain, though, when you're at the mall with your best friend and it seems like your face will split if you smile any bigger because the salesclerk just asked, "Can I help you boys with anything?" You both say no, thank you, and she leaves. His grin is just

as big as yours and you're flying. Your smile doesn't fade the entire rest of the day and you even smile at your reflection after you brush your teeth that night.

Having someone else's name comes with having someone else's body, so it's up to you to pick the right one. You scan baby name websites for weeks, giving different boy names to video game characters and online avatars in hopes of finding the one that fits you best. This one's too long, this one's too short, this one sounds wrong to your ears, this one flows wrong from your pen when you practice signing what might be your new name. Then, at last, you find the right one. You run with it. It takes the internet mere moments to make the switch, but your old friends and your family and even you yourself take longer. After a few days you instinctively respond to your new name. After a few months you stop instinctively responding when people say your old name. Half a year later and you can't even imagine ever being called anything else.

Living in someone else's body is sitting in class on the first day and noticing there's only one other boy and hearing the phrase you know is coming but still hope won't come, just this once, please. "Looks like there's only one boy in here!" Damn. Someone said it. And all the eyes in the room lock on to David or Kevin or some other boy who isn't you, and you feel yourself shrink into your seat to keep from correcting them even though your heart is racing and the words are pounding at your tightlypressed lips, begging you to let them out, begging you to let yourself out just this once. You swallow and those words are gone. You tell yourself "maybe next time" but you know you will always bite your tongue until it bleeds before daring to take the risk.

And then "next time" comes. You're at a bustling Thai restaurant with your roommates one night and the cheerful waitress comes over to offer you menus. "Can I get anything to drink for you ladies?" she asks with a smile. There you are again, cringing imperceptibly as you tell her you'd like a water. Your roommates place their own drink

orders, but you're not really listening. She comes back with the drinks a couple of blinks later. "Ready to order, ladies?" The rest of the night she punctuates every goddamn sentence with "ladies," still smiling as she stabs the word into your tightlybound chest without even seeing the blade. And there are a lot of sentences, because of course she wants to be attentive, it's her job after all, and how could she know that she's hurting you? Why can't you just get over it? Why can't you just be normal for once? You dismiss those questions as stupider than your inability to speak up, feeling a little bit like Julius Caesar as she comes over to the table yet again to ask "you ladies" how the food is. Et tu, waitress? you ask yourself in hopes of providing a distraction, and it works until she's back again.

There are people that would tell me that I chose all this and, even though I don't want to, I hate them. I hate that they can treat me as a hypothetical scenario. It took me two years to work up the nerve to stop shopping for clothes in the women's section. I still haven't worked up the nerve to stop using the women's bathroom. To get my body to finally be my own I have to give myself an intramuscular injection in the thigh every couple of weeks because my body makes the wrong type of hormone, so I have to give it the right one. I'm scared of needles, but I press through the muscle and terror so the testosterone can mingle with the adrenaline rushing through my anxious blood. And of course removing my breasts will mean surgery, but until then I bind my chest. Binding for too long can break a rib and binding while you sleep can cause you to asphyxiate, but even on the days every rib is screaming at me I can't bring myself to give them relief because I hate my chest more than I care about them. This is my reality. I don't get to postulate theories about it.

There are nights where I want to tear myself open. I think that maybe if I just went deep enough I would find my real self hiding beneath the surface, grateful that I finally freed him. I think that maybe that's my only option. I roll tighter into my covers and go to sleep.

There are days where I'm embarrassed to exist. Every word I speak is painful to hear because they all sound wrong. Every step I take is taken

in the wrong way. Everything I do is wrong, it's just that nobody can see how wrong I am, which somehow makes things worse.

But do you want to know what else living in someone else's body is? It's hope. It's being selfmade, in the truest sense of the word. It's gathering up the courage to not just be who you are, but demand that everyone acknowledge it. You know that, in time, you will make sure that everyone is listening while your voice rings out loud and clear. Someday your body will fully belong to you and it will be because you took whatever actions were needed to make yourself happy. You can perfectly envision the day that you look in the mirror on the way to the shower and flash yourself a smile because the girl that used to stare back at you is gone, replaced by the boy you always were.



Untitled
JODI TAI

For the Star

SARA WHEAT

Little star that lights the way
For children running through the fields,
granter of wishes for those that stay up
late to watch the night from their bedroom window.

Guider of travelers.
When one cannot see where they are going in the night,
there will always be your light.
Sailors lift their eyes
to wash themselves in your wonder.

Born from the remnants of the universe,
You shine bright and light the path
from so far away.
The dust of your sisters,
Flows in the blood of man.

Twinkle and dance,
in the song of the night.
Laughter around a bonfire
On the sand of the beach,
Lips finding each other under the willow tree
In the corner of the garden,
A cats purr from his seat on the fence.

Sleep all day,
eyes closed, turned away,
from the light of the sun.
Curl up next to the moon,
till the next night
when you will awaken,
and bathe in the pink clouds of dusk,
so you may sparkle to be seen
from any place on earth.
Never dim,
never let out your spark
Be the bright spot in the dark
And dance with the fireflies



Untitled
BERENICE CALVARIO

Rare

EMILIA PEREZ

You are the rarest book
in the greatest library
that I could never find.
You are an unattainable idea
of cursive handwriting
scrawled carelessly
on crisp white pages
edged with gold and
wrapped in thick black leather.
You are a closed book
that I don't have access to,
too ornate for my hands to touch.
Even if I could, you were written
in a language I do not know.



Captured
TYLER YOUNG



Untitled

MARGARET BRUNET

What He Stole

SERENA ZHEN

Hands that lay upon me;
touch not so gentle, not so rough.
Kisses, all aggressive.
None of it done with love.

Wrists pinned and body constrained
by hands like chains of lust,
like ropes of selfish nature –
his desire, so wrong.
I fought with strength,
with every ounce of energy,
with all my will.
My legs crossed and my body struggled,
but all was in vain and nothing changed.
My world fell.
My world darkened.

A moment paused
when he saw me stare –
my eyes filled with fear and plea
like trapped souls in dead end roads,
like cornered victims in an alley.
My movements of fear
only knew of trembles and quivers.
Maybe this will be enough
for him to yield, but no.

His gaze steered away as he continued.
What's left of attire was pawed at
and torn away by this monster, someone
I once thought would never hurt me.
My cries of "Stop!" and "No!"
did no good. "This isn't right..."

I begged. I prayed, desperately,
“Someone, someone please...
please help me...”

Streams slid straight
down both cheeks as
my body gave up, there I lay.
No more energy. Mind,
empty of all thoughts.
I felt all too weak, all too tired
to fight against his loveless motions.

A last scream of horror escaped me,
when he was finished,
when it was finally over.
Voice trailed off in whimpers.
Scattered breath.
I grasped for air,
tried to calm down,
tried to forget,
but I couldn't.

Innocence ripped.
Humanity stripped.
All visibly shown in bruises, my pain.
All I could hear was my beating heart.
As it pounded loudly,
my swollen eyes
flooded and poured out
to leave salty, bitter stains.

Lotus Blossom's Exotic Fortune Cookie Factory

ANONYMOUS

Confucius say,
Me love you long time and
Me so horny (Baby,
I love you more than
Asians love homework)
I once knew one Asian one time one place—
Do you know them?
And are you related to
Jackie Chan, Lucy Liu, Mulan?
And, where are you from? No, really,
Are you taking the girls
Back to China?
Back to the motherland to eat dog?
Can you even speak Engrish?

Fresh off the boat
Ten, twenty, fifty, hundred years ago
With your bowlcuts and
Rice bowls, with your chopsticks
and Laundromats and restaurants
With your track pants and clumsy
appropriated English sweatshirts
is your Golden Dream tarnished yet?

Your name is not Katherine
or Jenny or May or Sue or Lily or Grace
(or Ching Chong Ling Long Ting Tong)
but maybe you look like them all

Because you are a trope
You are Dragon Lady
Helicopter Parent
Tiger Mom

You are Joy Luck Club
You are Karate Kid

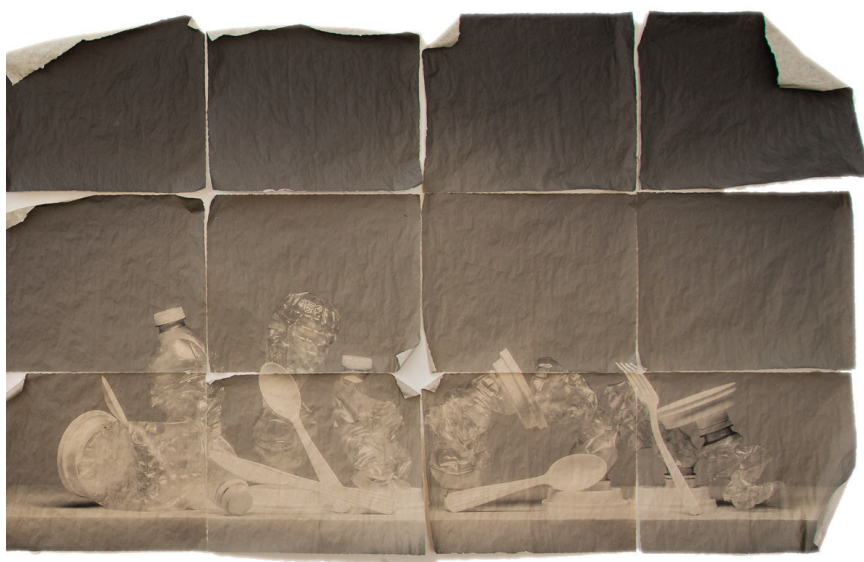
You are subordinate
You are submissive
You are studious and nerdy and stingy and
You are small, too small
To be a Real Man or Woman.

But you have nothing to complain about:
You are a good stereotype
You are Doctor, Lawyer, Pharmacist
You are good grades
You are piano prodigy
You are ambition, humility, diligence
You are good at math
You are Top Earning Potential
[when paired with a White spouse].

You are not slave,
You are not gangster,
You are not terrorist
or slacker or lazy or stupid

You are a good stereotype,
Thank You Very Much,
And this you know but—
you're still a stereotype.





Plastic Madness
DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY II CLASS



White Aspens
ANN FITZPATRICK

Pervasive Darkness

KELSEY PLAGEMAN

You got the bad news that's when the shadows grew.
You fell apart. You pushed me away.
You let the darkness take a hold of you.
It consumed you and you let it consume everything.
The pain of pushing me away you fed the monster.
It only grows in your misery.
It feasted on the heartache.
You let it break us apart.
The monster inside you grinned –
 it was fueled on bitterness and barked out a laughter of lies
 which came foaming from your mouth.
Hope and love were its weakness so you let the monster snuff them out.
 Its teeth bit through every good memory –
 tearing them from your heart till only the bad ones remained.
You've forgotten our love.
The darkness has won out.

I will always hope that one day you will find the match
but it's up to you to strike it and send that monster back.
Don't let it drown you in agony anymore.

Until then bittersweet love – I will be busy fighting the demons
of my own.

Living has Become a Matter of Survival

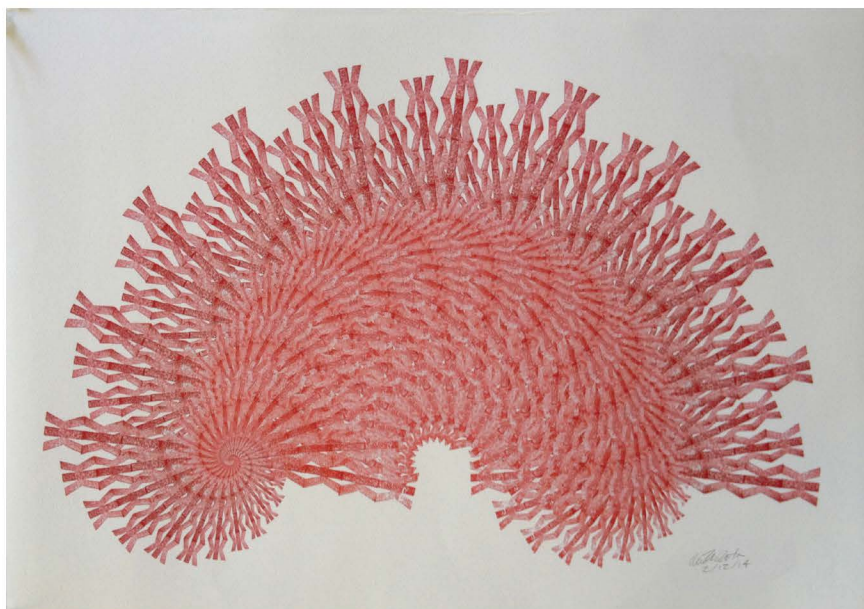
ADNAN HASTAM

compacting my
brown body into a space of imagined
terror,
they erase me, drowning me into the ideal coating of
whiteness,
served to the Violent appetite
of Capital.
Punishment for my difference.
This is a world where I have nothing left
but the Master's knife to
cut his tongue,
out of my mouth.



Burnt Out
CHRISTIAN LE

Opia: Revealing the I | 45



Red Stamp Fractal
ALEC SHIGETA

A Monotonous Mirage

COOPER STIVERS

Fragile minds at work,
amongst careless collages of play.
Mindful masters,
meticulously working their lives away.
The smog that floats over today
reeks with the sarcastic overtone
of yesterday's tomorrow.
Scared and alone.

A corrosive contention;
it lingers on
like a carefully crafted time bomb.
On and on. Oh, how I wish it were gone.
Yet what can I do?
An individual betwixt order and strife,
constantly contesting
the meaning of life.

Fearful followers flock
into the flood lights of foul play.
More can be seen at night
than during the day.
Few will eternally give way
to the weight of many.
We should spread the love
to those who haven't got any

hope. None left at all.
Let's rise one last time before we fall.



From Thorns
TYLER YOUNG

48 | *Calliope*

Press Play

CSILLA RICHMOND

You are a cliché.

Twelve, depressed, lonely. Scars running deeper than your flesh admits. You start to lose weight around the same time your skin begins to clear. Everyone tells you how pretty you are becoming.

They don't know that you can't bring yourself to eat.

They don't know that you can't bring yourself to sleep.

They don't know that your grades are slipping, along with your sanity.

Hell, not even your mom knows. She's preoccupied. Her other teenager, the one that is disappearing for days at a time, seems to be a more pressing matter.

All your friends are smoking weed and getting arrested and sticking their hands down each other's pants. You have never kissed anyone.

Years later, your girlfriend will tell you that the average person has seven relationships in their life. She was your first. You were not hers.

Scratch that. Your first abusive relationship began while you were still in elementary school.

Rewind.

Screaming, a fleshy smack, dogs barking. You cower beneath your blankets, curled on the floor next to your dog, in front of the couch where you sleep every night. You try to be small.

You hear your name. Your legs don't want to move, but before you can stop yourself, you are well on your way down the hallway. Your mom is crying.

"Look what he did! Look!"

You look.

One of her eyes is puffy and red, bleeding from the cheek bone. Cut from the ring on his finger.

And when it happens again, you are there to witness the act.

You hide in the closet (ha, ha), behind your mom's special dresses. You hear her hit the ground. You peek between filmy pieces of cloth, trembling. He is on top of her. His hands are around her throat. She's crying, crying.

When you go to school the next day, you wonder how it would feel to tell someone. It's at your throat, clawing to escape. You imagine purple fingerprints dotted across your collarbone.

Fast forward. You are seventeen.

Your father left you. You are afraid of rejection. You don't feel pretty without your piercings. You don't feel happy alone. When you tell your therapist your girlfriend has left you, she has a long conversation with herself about the effect abandonment has had on your relationship choices.

You either eat too much, or you don't eat enough. You are either incredibly manic or incredibly depressed. You are either entirely in love or disillusioned with the concept altogether. Your life is a series of extremes.

And when it isn't, it is colorless. Take two pills every night, and your mind stops buzzing. It is still. You don't want to read. You don't want

to paint. You don't want to write. You sit on your bed, patiently powering through all of your homework. You go to sleep every night at nine o'clock. You eat, sleep, drink like clockwork.

You don't wear dresses anymore. You never liked them all that much. Your mom deplores your questionable fashion taste. She worries about the fact that you "aren't a pretty lesbian".

You are weak. You have lost all your friends. You have alienated your family. All because a girl made you feel like you couldn't live without her.

Rewind. You are fifteen.

You tell yourself that this is where your problems started. They ruined you.

You wore dresses for her. She told you that you were beautiful. Beautiful became okay, okay became fat, fat became ugly. But when she pulled your shirt off and kissed you like she meant it, you believed her. And the boy watched from beside you on the bed. Your cheeks burned red. He rested a hand on your stomach. Your butterflies froze, dropped down into your gut, dug in like daggers.

Fast forward. Sixteen.

She isn't attracted to you. She never was. You punch a brick wall. You kissed a boy that made your flesh crawl. You aren't beautiful. You aren't beautiful. You aren't.

Rewind. Fifteen.

You used to joke that your dad probably couldn't even remember your birthday. You try to make yourself laugh when the phone call never comes.

Forward. Sixteen.

Smoke billows from your mouth. You purse your lips, emitting small rings as you exhale. Someone is banging, banging, banging on the door, and you can't stop laughing, coughing.

Rewind. Two.

Your older sister changes your diapers. Kisses your head. Spanks you when you don't want to share. Hugs you when you clutch her leg and cry for her to "Stay, stay, stay".

She left you, too.

Forward. Seventeen.

Forward. Seventeen.

Forward. Seventeen.

You are a cliché.

You fall apart when she leaves you. You cry. You beg her to take you back. All your problems started with your father. All your problems started with him.

Two pills make the buzz go away.

You are a cliché.

Down by the Beck

KELSEY BELOMY

Hush darling (you hate when I call you that)
Everything will be fine (it won't) I promise
I look at you like a sister
My sister
Bird with broken wings in a cage
in a basement dark corners
locked in her own frozen heart
I love you but I don't know how to help (you,
girl, nearly the same age as me
and how old were you
when you lost her)

do you miss h(im)er
do you wonder what it'd be like
if she were still here
I do, I think how could anyone
do that (alone)
make a plan and follow it all the way
and does she wish she hadn't screwed up
she must have days where she
wishes she could've been like that
(and when he pulled the trigger
did it make a mess
and was anyone around did he make a noise
or is he a tree in a forest with no witness
roots ripping out of the ground
disturbing dust
and insects
but not god
and the next person who came across him
did they think he just grew like that
sideways
inside out
and when they found him

did you have to clean him up
was there a mess
or just an imprint of wings in blood)

you don't know the grief yet, dear
(you hate me you hate me)
but that'll come soon
you're my sister but I have to wonder
how old were you when it happened
when you fell
I don't think I was there
I wasn't there
All I see now is dust and ants
centipedes and beetles
inching toward that place
where your heart used to be
you're here
but here has her in it which means
not for long

I wonder if you dream in shadowed dust like me
of cars by rivers
of sisters in cages
of lost ones tucked somewhere snug
covered by rounded stones



Oil Drip Danger
LILIANA NUNEZ



Untitled

BERENICE CALVARIO

Hallucinogen
ADAM ZITTEL

When my mother pours coral snakes into my cereal bowl, I close my eyes, ignoring the hissing and the fangs piercing my wrists and forearms, and concentrate on what I know must be, until one by one they subside back into cornflakes.

This is how it has always been.

In school, a tall, gaunt, black man with dreadlocks past his shoulders rants at us about the man and how he's keeping cocaine down. I peek at my neighbors notes. Biology. Cell division. My neighbor lets me copy his notes because he thinks I am nearsighted. This is ok.

Reality is a slippery thing. We can never really be sure if we're "with it" or not. All we know is what our brains tell us. Your brain is telling you that thing you just put in your mouth is pasta. It could be day old dog shit, and you'd have no idea, because your brain is saying "This pasta you're chewing on is delicious!" For me, reality isn't about finding what is; it's returning to what should be.

The light fixtures should not have little glowing beings inside them, pounding on thin glass walls until their tiny hands bleed.

The second hand on the clock should not be whirling backwards.

The cafeteria lady should not have a third eye on her forehead, glancing around furtively and blinking furiously.

But these are little things. They do not affect my functionality. I do not waste focus removing them.

My focus is needed elsewhere.

At lunch, a friend of mine walks by and stabs me with a wicked looking dagger, burying it up to the hilt in my side. I struggle not to cry out, hobble to the bathroom, and focus.

I know this knife is not here.

I know my side is smooth and unmarred.

And, in a few minutes, I am simply a student in the bathroom, washing their face.

When, while adjusting my chair, I accidentally put the leg through the eye of the pale, hairless face that has sprouted from the linoleum, and it begins screaming in agony, I close my eyes and breath. I cannot hear the teacher over this screaming, a teacher who my neighbor's notes confirm as real. There is no face. Only boring, grey linoleum. I hold this image in my mind, labeling it as what should be. In a moment, it is what is.

In my last class of the day, the teacher opens a vein in her arm, and begins to write the calculus equations we've been studying in blood on the board. The smell of blood hits my nose like a wave of copper, but the equations hold true, and I copy them down dutifully, breathing through my mouth.

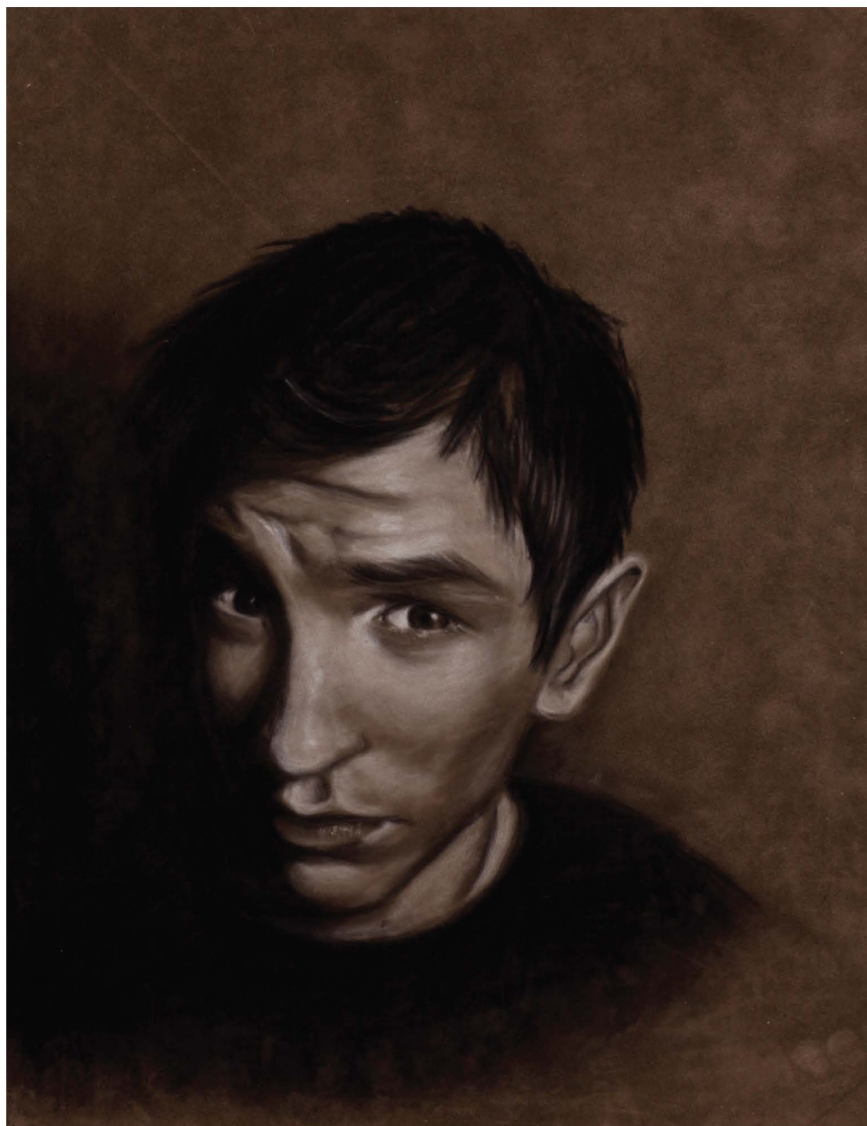
At home, I close my eyes as I walk up the steps to our front door. Perception of reality cannot trump physics, and the stairs are uneventful. I have done this many times. The front door, as well, has been sculpted into muscle memory. The seventeen steps to my bedroom are old friends. In my bedroom, I place my backpack in the corner, open my closet door, and lay on my bed as dragonflies the size of dinner plates begin pouring out. The deep hum of their bright wings blurring fills my bones as they circle below the ceiling, a helix of muted gleams and whirling kaleidoscopes. I open my mouth, let the sound stream into my lungs and sinuses, feel it echoing through my cavities and pouring out new, and changed. This warm, resonant vibration that makes my tissues crackle as they stretch past old inertia, and this, this is why I leave those little white cages in their white plastic bottle, this is why I hold them in my cheek every time they force feed me, this is life, this is love, and it happening inside my head doesn't stop it from being any less real.

Pomum Granatum

NICOLE CHERRY

When I was eight,
I ate six of those crimson seeds,
pressing each one with my tongue
to the roof of my mouth,
one by one, crushing them
and letting the juices run.
Sharp acidic tartness
intertwined with stinging sweetness
while I listened to the bitterness
soaked in the words my parents flung
like fists as they broke
each other's hearts in the next room.
Separation coupled with Anxiety
made me assume that it was my doing
that led to him shooing
me away to her in the heat of June
and she hurrying me back to him
on the cold howling winds of December.
And soon it was a given that I would receive
scorching hot words like burning ember
from my mother in the suffocating, smoldering summer
and nothing but ice, frigid, raw and freezing
from the empty stare of my father
who could hardly bear to be near me.
And I wished to be swept off into a fairytale,
away from the pockmarked empty shell
that used to hold more than six
shinning seeds, colored deep like blood,
that glistened like gems
when I pulled the fruit apart at the stem.

Now with each change of season
I have enough reason to believe
I should never have tasted a single seed,
because I'm not at all like Persephone.
Because nobody ever
really wanted me.



What?

ALEXIS ORTEGA



Jazzy Blues
MORGAN ANDRE

The Home

JODI TAI

Mother's silver clock reads fifteen minutes to six. From his quiet hiding place the boy peers through the closet door shutters and counts the seconds.

Hugging his knees to his chest he exchanges his counting for a song he learned at school. He mutters it to himself, barely audible as he continues to keep a lookout from his closet.

Downstairs someone is squealing with delight, another is rapping his loud feet against the floorboards as they stomp around the house. Childlike screams exude from the living room and the boy suspects that his Siblings have lost track of the time amidst their play. She'll be home soon.

Ten minutes to six.

The boy leans against the wall of his closet and wonders if he will be here next week. Perhaps by this time next week he will have a nice father and mother who will sweep him up to live with them in their chocolate tiered castle. He tries to hold onto the picture of it all as he drones out the sound of the older

Siblings rocking the fridge again. Mother always kept the key around her neck. It's just the rule. Five minutes to six.

The boy tries to sing a little louder, enough for someone outside his closet to hear. It still isn't enough to drown out the constant ticking of the treacherous silver clock. Each tick of the clock grows louder. Perhaps someone passing by might catch a bit of his song and remember the encroaching hour. Or maybe the absurd loudness of the clock will catch someone's attention. They should have kept better watch of the time. They know better. He hears a crash and secretly wishes that it were one of the framed phony photos that line the hallway entrance. All the faces that have vanished from the house

leaving only their forced smiles in the little wooden frames on her wall—they escaped her company. Maybe the boy will too.

One minute to six.

He stops his singing and focuses on the clock. It's still too loud. The incessant screams and banging and foolish sounds seem to amplify to all corners of the house. No one but the boy remembered the impending hour. The pans are still clanging in the kitchen and the Siblings haven't ceased their noise. Only the boy with his knees to his chest and his brow on his knees sits ready in his closet.

Thirty seconds.

It's too late for them. He scoots himself deeper into the closet, sinking deeper into obscurity among the coats. The boy wraps his arms around his legs as his eyes clamp shut. They should have known better.

Twenty seconds.

They'll be sorry.

Ten.

Impulse of survival dissolves his decency. His last fleeting thoughts of warning them come too late.

Downstairs the creak of the front door rings like a siren. The door opens. The tap of her heels come upon the wooden floors.

And the home is still.

Just a Small Town Girl

SARAH YUNG

There is a particular kind of misfortune that comes of living in a small town named after a big city. Take, for example, Paris, Virginia, which despite its impressive moniker has a current population of 51. Or Philadelphia, Mississippi. Or Long Beach, Mississippi. Or basically anywhere in Mississippi. (Sorry, Willie Morris.)

When I first heard about the move, I was excited. Small town girl with big city dreams, that was me, ready to go out and conquer the world. My parents were excited that I was excited—after all, what ten-year-old is ever that happy to leave her suburban hometown behind in favor of her parents’?

Well, you can imagine how disappointed I was, then, to move to a Podunk town with a population significantly smaller than the average New York neighborhood. I was used to sinking into the anonymity of large classes and their resulting swells of chaos. I didn’t want to know everyone’s business or for them to know mine. I didn’t want to accept the assortment of pies (pecan and sweet potato and apple) from Mrs. Logan down the street, or the jams and chocolate chip banana bread from the elderly Ms. Marion Lee. And I certainly didn’t want to accept the invitation of friendship from Miles, the freckly, mussed-haired beanpole of a hooligan with the golden boy smile from next door.

But life there grew on me like kudzu on abandoned farmhouses. Sure, the summers were blistering and the winters were hypothermic, and the closest mall was two hours away—and that was without traffic. Sure, here I had to create forest fantasies in overgrown meadows and invent games with chestnuts as pawns. Sure, here I had to walk home down winding dirt roads from the bus stop and chase away mosquitoes as big as blackberries.

But it wasn’t all bad. Here I learned to fish with minnows and neon

flies; to hunt, although I was too scared to ever shoot big game; here I grasped the warm, leather-clad wheel of the old jalopy in my sweaty palms, learning to drive out on the levee, so much safer than any city streets, and here we rehearsed in the shade of two oaks for our middle school talent show. Here we drank ice-cold sweet tea on the creaky old porch and here I had my first kiss at a drive-in movie too bland to remember.

I remember summers spent riding fast bicycles down to the old creamery, seeing everyone and their brother lined up for a taste of the velvety, slow-churned flavor of the week. Lemon and strawberry made with fresh fruit and the purest vanilla I've ever tasted and old-fashioned milkshakes so thick you could stand a spoon up in them. The booths were bouncy scarlet vinyl, sticky against our sweat-slicked skin, and crowded, everyone yelling so you could barely hear your own conversation without tuning into snippets of another like scanning radio stations.

It's been five years since Miles and I set out to seek our fortunes. Five years since we renounced our small town origins and set out with Big City Dreams, naively intent on changing the world. Five years since I've tasted that ineffable, small-town air, the scent of lovingly made baked goods on the windowsill, five years since the smell of sweet hay and real grass and earnest sweat. Five years since I wandered down a Main Street where everyone was community, not competition.

It's been five years since I left home, swearing anywhere was better than here, swearing I wouldn't come back until I'd found success.

It's funny, the longer I'm gone the better it was.



Peekaboo
CHRISTIAN LE

Opia: Revealing the I | 67

We All Live in Shalott

JENNIFER TRUONG

You say the world is dark, devoid of color and light, a grim and shadowed box, a dull and endless night.

Let me paint for you, reader; let me show you hues, which are vibrant and endless, colors you never knew.

“Impossible,” you say, so skeptical and wry,

“This room has only darkness; the colors have run dry”.

It’s true the world is dimmer. Of shadows, I too, am sick,

But color—meaning—still exist; let me show you the trick.

I’ll find you red, the reddest red, a shade so bold and bright.

It runs in veins, and leaves dark stains—a color of raw might.

And when it rises to the cheeks, from love or lust within,

It burns and glows—makes passions grow—like soft lips tinged with sin.

I’ll hold my breath ‘till I turn blue, exhale in a gasp, to wear the shade of somberness, while oxygen slips out of grasp.

My breath is raw, my lungs are sore, but now you get to see, a color cold, devoid of warmth, a shade sad and lonely.

I’ll show you yellow in my heart for hearts are made of gold.

This substance is both pure and strong shining like kings, in tales of old.

So many ways a heart can break—one jagged crack, or crumbs.
But even the most broken heart can be remolded by someone.

And here is yet another hue, brimming with potential unseen.

For golden hearts face gloomy blues, can make a hopeful green.

It was difficult to make this shade, more than you would expect.

But willingly I take the gloom, for you had not seen it yet.

We humans bruise in purple a consequence of two.

For raw emotions burn in red, and the pain glows subtle blue.

This violet shade, favored by kings, balances opposite sides. It carries
the power of red, while sad blue makes it wise.

And look! See all the colors now.

Watch every shade refract.

So with the spectrum nearly complete,

I need to end my act.

You'll see I may look different now; I've no color of my own. For each
shade was cast from me, and thrown into the sun.

To put meaning in the world

To make your visions seen,

To show someone else the rainbow,

It certainly isn't free.

I've no regrets, though, for much like Tennyson's Lady of Shalott,
Artists feel pain when they do work, but more when they do not.

Now, reader, promise me something. Say you promise me now.

Try to find your true colors, and paint your world somehow.

For though the world may still be dim, and, for some, entirely dark.

You can add light and color. You can add your art.



Juices
MORGAN ANDRE

Tuna Casserole

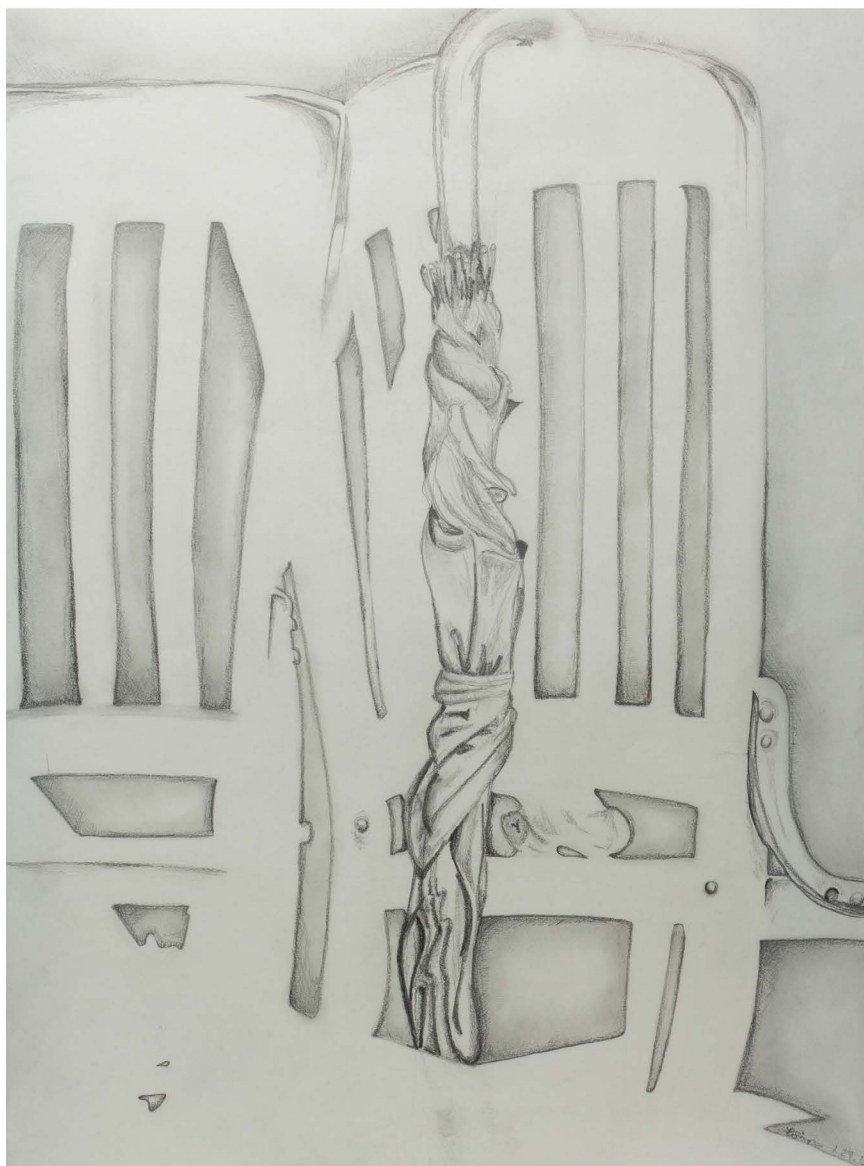
H.E. CARTER

The warm, familiar flavor
Dances over my tongue
And suddenly,
I'm dancing too,
A small child singing,
"Cheese and peas and tuna and rice,"
In time with the cooking sounds

Or maybe I'm standing,
Just outside the kitchen
With my housemates,
Some on two feet, some on four,
Our noses raised high in the air
To take in the comforting scent

Or I'm off somewhere,
Trying to ignore my nagging stomach
Until the sounds of the kitchen timer
And the bowls in the cupboard
Start a chain reaction of galloping feet,
Rushing to fill our bellies

But now I'm in a dorm room,
Far from the kitchen timer
And the bowls in the cupboard
And the rushing feet, two and four,
Left with only this simple dish
Of cheese and peas and tuna and rice
To fill me up with the warmth of home



Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head
BINAYPREET SINGH

Diablo Spring

MARY JO O'CONNOR

Absolute Resolute

Revelry in ravaging Reminisce in innocence

Stagger now you're crouching engulfed inside this memory distil your
insincerity rebel against our gravity

Taste the flavor of your terror



Untitled
MARGARET BRUNET



Untitled
DANTE PASQUINI

Dear Little Children

JEANNETTE K. SETIAWAN

Dear little girls, I hope you stop trying to find yourself in your reflection, because no mirror reflects your soul.

Your beauty is not going to be found in your reflection, but in loving yourself.

Dear little boys, I hope you stop trying to find yourself in the fog of cigarettes, because you are stronger than the way they define you.

Your strength is not going to be found in your confusion, but in accepting yourself.

Dear little children, I hope you love yourselves the way your parents love you, because you are more than the way society defines you.

You are way more than what they think you are.

If My Mother Were a Poem

CHRISTINE VINEY

If my mother were a poem,
she'd forget the other half of her simile,
leave it on the other side of the room, like—

She'd be the poem you always read when
you were crying or angry, but the piece of
paper it was written on would float away
in the wind on the strength of its own belief,
maybe coming to land in another country, or
maybe just doing a little turn before coming
back to settle in your hand like it never left.

There would be no proper rhyme or reason.
Effervescent, evanescent, eloquent, she'd
want to use all the words because it's only fair
and she can't exclude. A plethora, a pastiche,
she'd be editing forever, writing over
to give everyone a chance.

Style would be questionable,
whatever pretty goes:
a dash of scarlet symmetry and a
pinch of purple prose;
slightly surreptitious sibilance and a
rhyme scheme that doesn't fit.
Everyone would read it, and then most would forget,
until it drifted back into their lives, scratched on the
seat of the bus station or written in the stars.

It'd be the first page, it'd be the last page.
The first you picked up and the last you put down,
until you checked and the words were gone,
and you'd find them a month later,
written in the pattern of hibiscus petals
or spelled out in the first light of dawn,
there at 5 am and then gone by 6.



Hagar
JODI TAI



